Religious Verse in Leningrad Samizdat: Origins and Confluences

Josephine von Zitzewitz
University of Cambridge

Abstract

Religious, in particularly Christian imagery, was ubiquitous in Leningrad samizdat poetry of the 1970s. This essay addresses two main questions that are closely related: is the term «religious verse» appropriate for this kind of poetry; how are we to define «religious» in this case? Secondly, what were the common denominators of religious verse in 1970s Leningrad.

Keywords

Leningrad, poetry, samizdat, religion, 1970s

Contact

jhfv2@cam.ac.uk

The Centrality of Literature

The Moscow poet and critic Ol'ga Sedakova, herself the author of many poems on biblical topics, identifies Iosif Brodskii's 1962 poem "Rozhdestvenskii romans" (A Christmas Ballad) as the beginning of the trend that subsequent researchers have dubbed «metaphysical poetry» (Nesterov 75-97), «spiritual lyrics» (Krivulin, "Peterburgskaia spiritual'naia lirika" 99-110) and «Leningrad religious poetry» (Berg, "Neofitsial'naia"). Ultimately, the Christian theme, subdued in the poem if not in the title, is of limited importance in "Rozhdestvenskii romans". Rather, Sedakova singles out this poem because it expresses the indistinct longing of young intellectuals coming of ages in the Soviet 1960s as «тоска необъяснимая» (inexplicable longing). Even more importantly, it presents a world that was no longer mon-dimensional and flat, but multi-layered and permeable to inspiration, an inherently immaterial, unquantifiable entity: «Явление вдохновения волнует современников глубже многого другого: ведь это знак того, что наш мир открыт и проницаем для какой-то иной силы, это праздничная весть о какой-то иной смысловой глубине происходящего» (Sedakova, "'Muzyka glukhogo vremeni" 258). Brodskii belongs to the generation that yearned to fill the spiritual vacuum left when Soviet ideology began to disintegrate after Khrushchev's admissions at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956. The young intellectuals' antidote to this vacuum was to immerse themselves in literature and culture. Mikhail Epshtein contends that literature was so central to the worldview of the 1970s generation that they perceived the entire world around them through the prism of literary culture (Epshtein, *Postmodern v russkoi literature* 128-38). To some degree, this literature-centricity was a product of official policy. The power which Soviet ideology afforded to the written word was evident everywhere, in the rote learning of the classics at school and the many official programmes designed to foster new literary

talent, as well as in the rigid censorship and prescriptive aesthetics of the official doctrine of Socialist Realism.[1] For the poets of the Leningrad underground, literature became a bridge to another dimension, a path that Viktor Krivulin would call «счастливо обретенная вертикаль жизни» (happily acquired vertical of life) (*Okhota na mamonta* 8). A «vertical» conception of time, history, and aesthetics liberated the poets from the limitations of the here and now and granted them access to people and periods that were closer to them in outlook than the present, first of all the Silver Age (see below). In a characteristic mixture of highflying pathos and self-deprecating irony Viktor Krivulin describes the efforts of his fellow poets as «Опору ищешь ты, как будто строишь дом / из воздуха и аромата / расплавленного меда» (*Stikhi* 18).[2] Naturally, such a ephemeral house is not very stable, but its most important feature is the freedom «upwards», towards an unearthly dimension: «Но крыша, Господи, прозрачна и крылата!» (18).[3]

Religious echoes in this and other poems should be regarded as the expression of a concern that is primarily literary; yet at the same time they insist on a connection between the poet and a force, or being, that is transcendent, ineffable and ungraspable. Literature itself is thus imbued with religious properties. The model for the equation is provided by the Silver Age, especially the early twentieth-century Russian religious philosophers, such as Vladimir Solov'ev, Nikolai Berdiaev and Pavel Florenskii, who exerted colossal influence on the Symbolist poets.[4] Second-generation symbolists ascribed a dedicated religious function to literature; Andrei Belyi even stated «Символизм указывает вехи творческого пересоздания себя и мира [...] искусство не имеет никакого собственного смысла, кроме религиозного» (223).[5] Many Silver Age poets, from Akhmatova to Mandel'shtam to Maiakovskii, Tsvetaeva, the OBERIU poets and the late Pasternak subsequently produced work permeated by religious pathos, often adapting Christian motifs in ways that are flagrantly non-canonical and may seem transgressive. Another Silver Age feature that was adopted and adapted by the 1970s poets was *zhiznetvorchestvo*, the refusal to distinguish between art and life and the modelling of everyday behaviour on aesthetic criteria (cf. Paper and Grossman, *Creating Life*).

Zhiznetvorchestvo added a sense of «spiritual adventure» (Krivulin, "Peterburgskaia spiritual'naia lirika" 100) to a bohemian existence that was precarious in material as well as social terms. Tat'iana Goricheva specified how the unofficial poets invested their marginality with metaphysical significance: «Это был низ, но низ не социальный. Социальность

[1] Most unofficial poets had been attending the after-school poetry circles and LITOs specifically set up to encourage new literary talent during the 1960s. See, for example, Elena Pudovkina's memoir on literary youth clubs and their teachers "Klub 'Derzanie'". Official organisations, including the Writers' Union, provided targeted programs for young poets; see the first part of Emily Lygo's *Leningrad Poetry 1853-1975: The Thaw Generation*.

[2] «You seek support, as if you were building a house / out of air and the fragrance / of molten honey above a flower».

[3] «But the roof, my God, is transparent and winged!».

[4] For the significance of religious philosophy for Symbolism see: P. Gaidenko, *Vladimir Solov'ev i filosofiia Serebrianogo veka*. For accounts of how the religious philosophers were read in the 1970s underground see, for example, Evgenii Pazukhin, *Zerkalo slavy*, especially page 21; Aleksandr Mironov, "Malaia Sadovaia. 1960-e. Beseda s Iuliei Valievoi"; Nikolai Nikolaev, "Pod znakom 64-go".

[5] «Symbolism points out the signposts of the creative re-creation of the self and of the world [...] art has no meaning besides religious meaning».

нас не интересовала. [...] Это был низ метафизический, то есть низ, который одновременно раскрывает измерения глубины и высоты» (8).[6] This conception raises the unofficial poet, existing at the fringes of society, to the status of a Pushkininan romantic hero with superior vision, a vision that includes a 'connection' with the divine. He or she is the only living, dynamic force in a deserted (cultural) landscape; simultaneously elevated above and alienated from those around him. Krivulin uses a Dostoevskian term to describe the unofficial poet: «Человеку подполья, поземке пустынной земли', / придан голос высокий, почти за границами слуха» (*Stikhi* 54).[7] At the same time, the poets were aware of the anaemia of their cultural environment and their own marginality, and once again Krivulin coined a memorable term, referring to his peers as «Дети полукультуры» (children of half-culture) (44). In proclaiming «Дух культуры подпольной, как раннеапостольский свет / брезжит в окнах» ("P'iu vino arkhaizmov" [I Drink the wine of Archaisms]; *Stikhi* 108).[8]

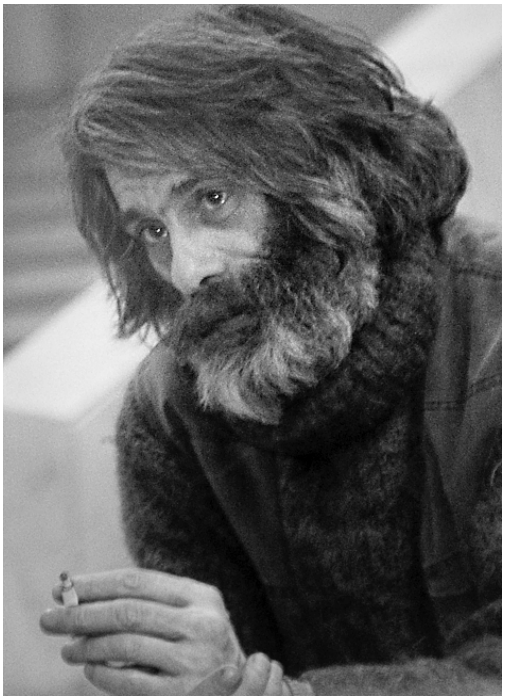

Fig. 1. Viktor Krivulin. Photo by Dmitrii Ivashintsev, used with the permission of Tatiana Kovalkova.

[6] «It was a low place, but not in the social sense. Social status was of no interest to us. This was a low place in the metaphysical sense, that is, a low place that simultaneously opened up the dimensions of depth and height».

[7] «The underground man, the blizzard of the desert earth / has the gift of a high voice, almost beyond audibility».

[8] «The spirit of underground culture, like the light of the early apostles / dawns in the windows».

Krivulin boldly and irreverently equated the «culturological project of his generation» (Ivanov 304) with the efforts of the early Christians whose persistence ensured the spread of Christianity. Thus conceived, the persona of the marginal poet is invested with religious, and specifically Christian, qualities. Most importantly, the early Christians were martyrs, people so passionately committed to their faith that they were prepared to die for it. Krivulin alludes to this willingness to suffer when he writes: «Только Слово / желая, не славы / не жалей о железах тюрьмы» ("Ne pleniaisia" [Don't Be Fascinated]; *Stikhi* 98).[9] These lines infuse the unofficial poets' 'cultural imperative' – to forego the desire for 'glory', i.e. official publication and accept marginalisation and potential persecution in exchange for the opportunity to write the texts they consider worth writing – with Christian pathos. The use of the capital «S» in *Slovo* (Word), indicates that the word here is more than just the literary, poetic word. It is also Logos, the eternally creative divine Word which, according to John 1, became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ.[10] There is a distinct notion of word-worship in the religious poems of Krivulin and several others, which presents problems if these poems are read in a traditional theological frame. Krivulin remembers that Oleg Okhapkin, whose circumstances were especially precarious, thought of himself as a hermit monk: «Он сам себя обрек на голод "ради слова" и, фиксируя свое состояние в поэтической форме, говорил фактически о "голоде словесном", о неутолимой потребности героически подражать Богу-Слову» ("Peterburgskaia spiritual'naia lirika" 103-04).[11] Okhapkin himself apparently wrote a poem called 'Golod' ['Hunger'] on precisely this topic; however, the manuscript was lost when Okhapkin destroyed parts of his own archive in 1983. Alongside their status of marginal living outside official culture, poverty was thus another factor allowing the unofficial poets to draw parallels between their own situation and that of the early Christians who were willing to sacrifice everything for their faith.

The Remnants of the Christian Universe

All texts quoted so far assert that the writing of poetry is akin to religious practice. In writing these texts, the poets stepped out of the everyday and onto 'holy ground' (see the discussion of "Neopalimaia kupina" below). The recurrence of traditional Christian imagery, and not at least the personal faith of some of the poets, indicate that this 'holy ground' was suffused with the remnants of the Christian universe. It is equally clear that at the end of the 20th century, this universe had developed large referential gaps, and that furthermore the fragments preserved in poetry do not correspond to the dogma of any one religion or confession. Sergei Stratanovskii describes them poignantly:

> Стеклотару сдают, неботару
> Баботару восторгов, надежды

[9] «Desire only the Word / rather than glory / do not regret the fetters of prison».

[10] For a study of the logocentricity of Russian modernist literature see Thomas Seifrid, *The Word Made Self: Russian Writings on Language, 1860-1930*.

[11] «He condemned himself to hunger "for the sake of the word" and, recording his state in poetic form he practically spoke about "verbal hunger", about the insatiable need to emulate God-the-Word».

Баботару любви
с отпечатками скотства и пьянства
Неботару без неба, с остатками боли и яда
Боготару пространства
с плотвой Иисусовой, с мусором
С метафизикой боли,
метафизикой зорь и надежды. (26)[12]

The neologisms *babotara* and *bogotara* might seem opaque, but they are presented as obvious analogues to *steklotara* – empty glass bottles and jars that can be returned to the shop to redeem a deposit. The new terms likewise refer to empty shells the speaker has no longer use for and/or that have been discarded, a dream of paradise disappointed, the remnants of a belief system. And yet it is precisely the remnants of the belief system, evident in the fish handed out by Jesus, that are at the basis of a metaphysics «of dawn and hope». The poem testifies to the spiritual yearning described by both Brodskii and Sedakova earlier and ends on a carefully positive note.

Fig. 2. Sergei Stratanovskij. Photo by Tatiana Gord, used with the permission of Tatiana Kovalkova.

In a series of essays, published in the journal *Volga* in 1993, Stratanovskii provides a very robust analysis of the referential framework defining the remnants of the religious and Christian universe in the poetry of his contemporaries ("Religioznye motivy v sovre-

[12] «They return glass tare, heaven tare / The woman tare of delight and hope / The woman tare of love / with traces of beastliness and drunkenness / Heaven tare without heaven, with remnants of pain and poison / God tare of space / with roach given by Jesus, with rubbish / With metaphysical pain, / the metaphysics of dawn and hope».

mennoi russkoi poezii").[13] The series title is programmatic, identifying the topic of investigation as «religious motifs in poetry» rather than «religious poetry», expressing an overall sceptical attitude to the potential of religious poetry emerging from the underground. Stratanovskii's main thesis is that at the end of the 20th century, the traditional idea of an anthropomorphic God as Creator of the universe is defunct. For urban intellectuals, Stratanovskii argued, a God described in concrete images has lost credibility; instead, the yearning for God finds expression in a mystical spirituality, based on the individual's particular experience of God.[14]

Throughout the history of Christendom, mystics have tried to express in words that which resists expression and is profoundly personal; examples include the Spiritual Canticle of St John of the Cross (16th century), the Hymns of St Symeon the New Theologian (11th century) and many others. We find examples of mystical poetry in the Bible, too, especially the Gospel of St John. Mystical poetry acknowledges the disparity and never-closing gap between language and that to which it refers; it can even be an exhortation to silence. Stratanovskii cautions against reading the poetry of his contemporaries, with its strong element of playfulness, as straightforward accounts of mystical experience (60), and it such a reading requires a leap of faith. The ultimate conclusion whether a particular poet deserves to be called a mystic is up to the individual reader. It is, however, worth making this leap of faith at least theoretically, because mysticism provides a key to some of the most puzzling imagery to emerge from the Leningrad underground.

Poetry and Ecstasy

Elena Shvarts explores the brokenness of the world, bending down to find the ground under her feet to be brittle. Her spiritual quest takes place in the wastelands of her native city. Like Brodskii, Krivulin, and Stratanovskii, she prefers the industrial outskirts to the grand facades of imperial Petersburg. These places are especially 'permeable' to forces from beyond, and it is this permeability that makes them sites of religious revelation:

> Ты ломок, тонок, ты крошишься фарфоровою чашкой, в ней
> Просвечивает Бог, наверно. Мне это все видней, видней.
> Он скорлупу твою земную проклевывает на глазах. (Shvarts, vol. I 135)[15]

Yet the outside force, which Shvarts calls «God», with a capital letter, is a threatening force, aiming to destroy the subject's «earthly carapace», i.e. the boundary between the outside world and her inner being. At the same time the emphasis on permeability, an enduring feature of literary depictions of Petersburg ever since Pushkin's Bronze Horseman, constitutes a conscious allusion to a long-standing tradition in Russian literature; Shvarts is

[13] Poets discussed include Sedakova, Shvarts, Veniamin Blazhennykh, Pasternak, Brodskii, Bobyshev, Oleg Okhapkin, Boris Likhtenfeld, Elena Pudovkina, Sergei Petrov, Viktor Mamonov, Nikolai Baitov.

[14] Stratanovskii based his argument on the teaching of the 14th-century German mystic, Meister Eckhart, who observed that God 'vanishes' when we try to lock him into an image (Stratanovskii, "Religioznye motivy v sovremennoi russkoi poezii. Stat'ia pervaia" 158).

[15] «You are fragile and dainty, you crumble like a porcelain cup; God shines / through, probably. I see this more and more clearly. / He is pecking through your earthly carapace for all to see» ('Kak eta ulitsa sovetsia' ['What This Street is Called']).

thus staking her claim to inclusion in this tradition. Shvarts's Petersburg is unabashedly sinister, submerged as it is by an inherently violent Russia in the cycle *Chernaia Paskha* [Black Easter]:

Мы ведь — где мы? — в России,
Где от боли чернеют кусты
[..]
Но рухнула духовная стена —
Россия хлынула — дурна, темна, пьяна.
Где ж родина? И поняла я вдруг:
Давно Россиею затоплен Петербург. (Shvarts, vol. II 79-80)[16]

Ultimately this violence transcends all national boundaries, assuming metaphysical qualities. The spiritual destitution is all-encompassing, rendering the home as well as the nation hostile and uninhabitable. In this world, where «церковь без крестов / стоит, как стебель без цветов» (Shvarts, vol. I 220-21),[17] God dwells only in that which is broken and base. Moreover, this God is not almighty: as if conditioned by the surroundings in which he appears, he does not offer comfort or salvation. Transformation and resurrection, the key goals of the Christian story, are patently unattainable. The final poem of the *Chernaia Paskha* cycle ends on the ultimate triumph of death over life – the direct opposite of what happens in the Christian story of Easter. The poet encounters Life and Death in the guise of two old women but fails to tell one from the other. As a consequence, her Easter is «black», the violence of Good Friday never transformed by the miracle of resurrection.

Fig. 3. Elena Shvarts. Author unknown. With thanks to Kyrill Kozyrev who gave me the picture.

[16] «Where are we after all? In Russia / where the shrubs blacken with pain […] But the spiritual wall has collapsed/ And Russia gushed in, evil, dark and drunk./ Where is my motherland? And then I got it:/ Russia had flooded Petersburg long ago».

[17] «A church without crosses / stands like a stalk without flowers» ("Lotsiia nochi" 5 [Sailing Directions for the Night]).

Several of Shvarts's programmatic religious lyrics can be found in a cycle with the intriguing title *Lestnitsa s dyriavymi ploshchadkami* (Staircase with Hole-ridden Landings) – another site that is, quite literally, exhibiting holes, its permeability visible to the naked eye. It is here that the poet is experiencing various states of religious trance. She is dreaming to be the one who, literally, spreads «the fabric of my hear under my saviour's feet»[18] or dances alongside (the prophet, psalmist and king) David in "Tantsuiushchii David" (Dancing David):

Танцующий Давид, и я с тобою вместе!
[...]
Трещите, волосы, звените, кости!
Меня в костер для Бога щепкой бросьте.
[...]
О Господи, позволь
Твою утишить боль.
Щекочущая кровь, хохочущие кости,
Меня к престолу Божию подбросьте. (Shvarts, vol. I 79-80)[19]

The frantic dance illustrates the role of ecstasy as a medium for approaching the divine and the longing of the seeker to be one with the divine, the longing that drives all mystics. Ecstasy, induced by dance, has been part of religious ceremonies from ancient times (cf. shamanic ceremonies on all continents, the dervishes of Sufi Islam etc). The ecstatic trance allows the subject to transcend his or her physical self. In her ecstasy, the poet is capable of great, even shocking intimacy with the God she worships, matter-of-factly presuming to ask permission to soothe his «pain». We do not find out whether the poet-mystic achieves her ultimate aim, union with the divine, and this is natural, because such an experience cannot be related. As readers, we are left with the disturbing image in which the poet's physical self seems destroyed – dissolved into its constituent elements until only blood and bones are left.[20] And yet it is this ecstasy that enables the poet to create.

Viktor Krivulin speaks of a different kind of out-of-body experience. "Neopalimaia kupina" (The Burning Bush) likens the artist to Christ and faith to art. A blind artist engages in a forty-day fast that evokes Christ's 40 days in the wilderness: «Художник слеп. Сорокадневный пост» (*Stikhi* 110).[21] While fasting, the artist as a vision of a burning bush and the outlines of a church: «Перед [художником] – неопалимый куст / и образ храма светел, как костер / средь бела дня. Но храм пока что пуст».[22] The

[18] In the poem "Tkan' serdtsa rassteliu Spasitel'iu pod nogi" (I Spread the Fabric of My Heart Under my Saviour's Feet), "5 etazh – vverkh" (5th Floor – Upstairs) of the cycle *Lestnitsa s dyriavymi ploshchadkami* (Shvarts, vol. I 79).

[19] «Dancing David, I am with you! / [...] Crackle, my hair and clatter, my bones! / Throw me, a chip, in the fire for God. / O Lord allow me / To soothe your pain. /Oh tickling blood, oh giggling bones / Throw me up to the throne of the Lord».

[20] Shvarts used the motif of dancing repeatedly, e.g. in "Nebesnyi balet" (Heavenly Ballet).

[21] «The artist is blind. A forty-day fast».

[22] «Before [the artist] there is a burning bush / and the image of a church shone like a fire / in bright daylight. But the church is still empty».

words «still empty» point to a hopeful future in which the artist will fill the church «with himself».[23] "Neopalimaia kupina" is a complex poem about the function of words and art as cultural memory. The «forty-day fast» becomes a potent symbol of the situation of the unofficial poet who is languishing in a wilderness that is simultaneously cultural and spiritual, summarised in the image of church as a crumbling ruin with peeling murals: «но видимый сквозь полутьму/ остров – кусок штукатурки – остаток от росписей храма».[24] Yet Krivulin is a master of irony; it is impossible to ascertain in which key to read the poem: its potential to be read as a 'serious' religious vision is undercut by allusions to drunkenness and the distinct possibility that the artist has woken up in the ruin after a drinking bout and might be trying to set it alight (or is he mainly lighting a cigarette?). At the same time it is precisely this intoxication that affords the poet (glimpses of) a very important insight: art has spiritual importance, and the artist is stepping on sacred ground. The church in question is not just a man-made church that can be ruined, but «the burning bush», the site of the encounter between Moses and God in the wilderness (Exodus 3).

For the unofficial poets, the apostles of a new culture, drunkenness was a fact of daily life and a frequent catalyst for inspiration. Krivulin writes:

> Кто сказал: катакомбы?
> В пивные бредем и аптеки!
> И подпольные судьбы
> черны, как подземные реки. ("P'iu vino arkhaizmov")

The poem in which these lines appear is called "P'iu vino arkhaizmov" (I Drink the Wine of Archaisms),[25] and the title alludes to a different kind of intoxication – the intoxication with language and words. It is no coincidence that Krivulin singles out «archaisms» as the substance on which to be drunk, as the aesthetic of the Leningrad poets was essentially nostalgic, orientated towards Russia's rich poetic tradition rather than linguistic innovation. Archaisms enriched and rejuvenated poetic language in the 1970s; one can say that the 1970s poets cultivated a certain avant-gardism through archaism. The use of archaisms was one way of substituting a 'high' register for the existing one, as the high register in contemporary language was irredeemably tainted with Soviet associations. The cultivation of «archaic» subject matter, such as classical literature and, specifically, Scripture, signified the author's belonging to a 'cultured' sphere that was distinct from Soviet 'high' culture.[26] At the same time, being «drunk on words» constituted yet another act of word-worship.

The religious visions of Aleksandr Mironov, a poet whose work exhibits strong absurdist elements, are frequently tied to another kind of ecstasy, namely sexual abandon. The great religions, and Christianity with them, traditionally have been suspicious of this

---

[23] In Russian «лишь бы наполнить собою пустые объемы».

[24] «But an island is visible / in the semi-darkness – a bit of plaster – a remainder of the church's murals».

[25] For an analysis of the intertextual relationship between "P'iu vino arkhaizmov" and the work of Osip Mandel'shtam, one of the writers admired by the unofficial poets, see Walker, "The Spirit(s) of the Leningrad Underground".

[26] The use of lexical and grammatical archaisms in unofficial poetry has been described in great detail by Liudmila Zubova in *Sovremennaia russkaia poeziia v kontekste istorii iazyka*.

strongest of human drives and regulated it tightly; examples we find in the theology of St Paul or the sublimation of sexual love in the Song of Songs. The conflation of religious and sexual ecstasy is thus a provocation to traditional religious sensitivity as well as to the Soviet literary aesthetic that frowned upon the depiction of both religion and carnality. "Plod pokoianiia – pokoi" (The Fruit of Repentance is Calm) begins with a traditional patriarchal representation of the Fall: «Как плод жены, смертельный плод / Плод яблонего древа» (*Izbrannoe* 75).[27] Through an overly simplistic reading of Genesis 1 female sexuality becomes equated with sin and death. According to the biblical tale, the consumption of the 'forbidden fruit' from the tree of knowledge, which Eve fed to Adam, led to the expulsion of the couple from Eden; this is the moment humankind became mortal. Painters have depicted the fruit as an apple, and its consumption – Adam giving in to Eve's offering, her temptation – is traditionally associated with sex, perhaps because it opened the eyes of Adam and Eve to their own nakedness. While the sexual connotations attract our attention, more problematic from a theological point of view is the identification, in this poem, of the vault of the sky with the vault of a grave, a sepulchre: «Свод гробовой – небесный свод / Покой земли и чрева».[28] The poet seems to be suggesting that death is indeed the end, that «heaven» does not offer resurrection and redemption. The next stanza confirms this: «Но как забыть уста в раю / И славное бесчестье / двух тел у смерти на краю».[29] The poet explicitly identifies the eating of the fruit, in the reference to «mouth», which preceded the expulsion from Paradise (cf. the reference to «death») with sex, while using the word «shame», a pejorative term with heavy moral baggage, in order to describe the union of two bodies. Yet the adjective defining shame is «glorious», and the stanza implicitly invites us to see sex as a paradisiacal.[30] This ambivalent attitude towards sexual ecstasy, wavering between sin and religious insight, is characteristic of Mironov.

[27] «Like the fruit of woman, the poisonous fruit / Fruit of the apple tree / [...] The lightest calm is scattered / like ashes into the unknown».

[28] «The vault of the sepulchre / the vault of the sky / The peace of earth and womb».

[29] «But how can I forget your lips in paradise/ and the glorious shame/ of two bodies on the verge of death».

[30] This identification of sexual ecstasy and religious, even sacramental experience, albeit without the tarnish of shame, echoes Valerii Briusov's 1903 poem "V Damask" (To Damascus): «Губы мои приближаются / К твоим губам, / Таинства снова свершаются, / И мир как храм. // Мы, как священнослужители, Творим обряд» (My lips are approaching / Your lips, / The sacraments are celebrated again, / And the world is a temple. // We, like priest, carry out the ritual) (*Sobranie sochinenii*, vol I 311).

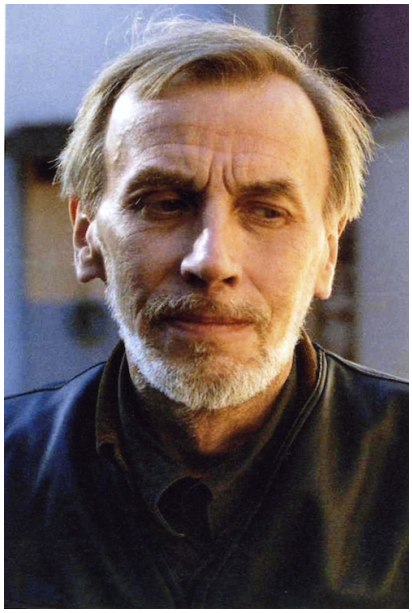

Fig. 4. Aleksandr Mironov. Photo by Aleksandr Andreevskikh. Used with the permission of the author. With thanks to Kyrill Kozyrev.

"Ustav vnimat' slovam kak svodniam" (Having Grown Tired of Heeding Words As Procuresses) is a dream of a sexual encounter, unequivocal in its attempt to present sexuality as a means of conveying religious meaning. We encounter «lips» that drink in «the wine of love»; the claim that the sexual encounter was «a light in the darkness of the Lord» during which «two people were conjoined by God's grace» (*Izbrannoe* 40).[31] Simultaneously, this is a poem about words, from the title to the assertion that «Она была благоуханна от слов ловимых на лету».[32] However, it also introduces us to Mironov's negative concept of language as something that resists decoding and understanding – the title line in full reads «Уста внимать словам как сводням / Я перестал их понимать»,[33] and at the centre of the poem we find an abyss, a yawning absence of words: «И нет ни слов ни недомолвок / Лишь свет в тьме и немота».[34]

Mikhail Berg has argued that crossing boundaries in relation to religious imagery can liberate their true meaning from under the sediments of time and routine practice (*Literokratiia* 167). Berg's argument is a development of Mikhail Epshtein's attempt at conceptualising the religious aspects of postmodern Russian literature, especially his in places very loose definition of the apparently meaningless or aggressively non-figurative 'anti-art' of the avant-garde as a form of holy-foolishness that cleanses the original meaning of

[31] «Мне снился свет во тьме Господней: / Двоих связала Благодать».

[32] «She was fragrant from words caught in flight».

[33] «Having grown tired of heeding words as procuresses / I stopped understanding them».

[34] «There are neither words not failures to mention things / Only light in the darkness and wordlessness».

faith.[35] While it is debatable whether Mironov's poetry truly belongs in this category, it is undeniable that he methodically denies the existence of any fixed meaning that can be communicated by words: «Ужь коль не ты, кто нам поможет / чертить число Небытия […] / И смысл последний упразднить» ("Pishi, moi genii, serdtsu moemu" [Write, My Genius, to my Heart]; *Izbrannoe* 53).[36] If we accept this position, Mironov's art turns into something that has the power to show us another reality – a reality in which the laws of referentiality and logic do not hold, and which can thus only be defined by what it is not, in an analogy to apophatic theology. The 'religious' poetry Mironov created does not any longer hint at something behind the material world in positive terms. This is consonant with Stratanovskii's insight, mentioned above, that faith in a conceptually graspable God is defunct. And yet religious imagery recurs with predictable regularity in Mironov's poetry, habitually signposting a religious context.

Poets as Holy Fools?

The ecstasy that connects the vision of Krivulin, Shvarts, and Mironov is a common feature of religious visions – an experience that takes the subject beyond their own body and the usual confines of time and space. A biblical example of an ecstatic experience is the conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus in Acts 9. The ecstasy of the Leningrad poet, which Stratanovskii, talking about Elena Shvarts, describes as sacrilegious to a traditional Christian consciousness ("Religioznye motivy v sovremennoi russkoi poezii. Stat'ia pervaia", *Stikhi* 60), is that of the outsider primarily focused on challenging what is conventional and acceptable. Its inherent ambivalence and the suspension of ordinary social rules are features of carnival. Mironov is conscious of this, remarking that the 'paradox of time' consisted in the «присутствие карнавального момента, несмотря на тягу к ортодоксальности, к церкви, к истине» ("Malaia Sadovaia" 34).[37] Their transgressive, ecstatic spirituality places the samizdat poets in the tradition of the Holy Fool, who thus becomes another prototype allowing them to interpret their path as a form of literary and spiritual excellence.[38] The Holy Fool has been a staple figure in Russian religious literature since the Middle Ages, usually featuring as a saint, in keeping with the biblical tradition that the message of the Spirit sounds foolish to the world (1 Corinthians 1:18-23 and 1 Corinthians 2:14). Subsequently, the meaning of the term was extended and the Holy Fool found entry into secular texts as an outsider who is permitted to challenge hierarchies or

[35] Epshtein's discussion first and foremost concerns conceptualism and sots-art in the visual arts, but his observations, especially with regard to the power of negation, can also be applied to Mironov: «Искусство впадает в убожество, чтобы причаститься участи Божества, пройти вслед за ним путь позора и осмеяния [...] Религиозное приходит сюда не как цель самоутверждения, а как момент самоотрицания» (Art sinks into squalor in order to make one's communion with the fate of the Godhead, to follow him on the path of shame and derision. [...] Here, the religious impulse appears not as the objective to assert oneself, but as a moment of self-abnegation) ("Iskusstvo avangarda" 223).

[36] «If not you, then who will help us / draw the number of Heavens… / and abolish the last bit of meaning».

[37] «The presence of the carnivalesque moment regardless of the pull of orthodoxy, the church, the truth».

[38] Marco Sabbatini has read the Leningrad underground in the key of «holy foolishness», establishing the genesis of the literary archetype as a distinctive form of inner emigration (Sabbatini, "The Pathos of Holy Foolishness in the Leningrad Underground").

highlight society's corrupting structures precisely because society does not recognise him as its own.[39] In this context, madness becomes a precious sign indicating that the madman/woman has been granted some higher form of inspiration. Elena Shvarts shows her awareness of this tradition when she claims it as central to poetic creation:

> Поэзия начиналась с священного безумия... как она бывала хороша, когда ныряла в море безумия и выныривала в свет разума с жемчужиной неразумной мысли в хищних зубах! (Shvarts, vol. III 270)[40]

Crucially, the archetype of the Holy Fool inspired the literary predecessors of the Leningrad poets, i.e. the Silver Age writers and thinkers in whose work the enduring triangle connecting literary creativity, ecstatic self-forgetfulness and the religious dimension first took shape. Vladislav Khodasevich likened the artist to the Holy Fool and construed art as an inherently ecstatic activity that enables the artist to approach the divine through losing herself.[41] Viacheslav Ivanov, in his analysis of Dionysian worship, speaks of «священн[ый] хмел[ь] и оргийн[ое] самозабвени[е]» (V. Ivanov 43).[42] A Silver Age statement that is particularly relevant to Elena Shvart's "Tantsuiushchii David", discussed above, is Maksimilian Voloshin's insistence that ecstatic dance is akin to prayer.[43] The poet-heroine's dance fulfils the function of «выносить за пределы тела восприимчивость ощущений» (take the receptiveness of sensation beyond the limits of the body) (Briusov, "Ko vsem, kto pishet" 67).[44] The creative act thus becomes a medium throwing the artist open to the influence of a different dimension. The impulse linking sexuality and religious pursuits was provided by the Russian religious philosophers (cf. Matich). For the proponents of «New Religious Consciousness», a term coined by Nikolai Berdiaev, sexuality played an important role; Berdiaev construed it as capable of not merely uniting two individuals, but also unifying society ("O novom religioznom soznanii").[45] For the symbolist poet and theorist Dmitrii Merezhkovskii, the main concern was the creation of a «New Church». This «Religion of the Third Testament» would restore mankind to its fullness, reconciling the explicit physicality of the Old Testament and pagan antiquity with the ascetic spirit of the New Testament.[46] Essentially, all these writers were following Vladimir Solov'ev's teaching about male and female as the mortal fragments of

---

[39] A study that looks at the roots of the tradition and also includes secular literature and culture is S.A. Ivanov, *Blazhennye pokhaby: kul'turnaia istoriia iurodstva;* see also Per-Arne Bodin, *Language, Canonization and Holy Foolishness: Studies in Postsoviet Russian Culture and the Orthodox Tradition*.

[40] «Poetry began as holy madness [...] how gorgeous poetry was when it dived into the sea of madness and came back up to the light of reason, in its predators' teeth the pearl of an unreasonable thought».

[41] «Природа творчества экстатична» (Khodasevich 389).

[42] «In a state of 'orgiastic self-forgetfulness».

[43] «Танец – такой же священной экстаз тела, как молитва – экстаз души» (Dance is sacred ecstasy of the body in the same way as prayer is sacred ecstasy of the soul) (Voloshin 397).

[44] For a discussion of the role of ecstasy for Silver Age poets see A. Zhitenev, *Poeziia neomodernizma*, 20-26, 30-31.

[45] Berdiaev produced a number of essays on this topic, in particular 'Metafizika pola i liubvi', (1907).

[46] For detailed information see the entries on Merezhkovskii in: V. Bychkov, *Russkaia teurgicheskaia estetika* and P. Gaidenko**,** *Vladimir Solov'ev i filosofiia Serebrianogo veka*. For a more theologically orientated account see: A. Men', *Russkaia religioznaia filosofiia. Lektsii.*

a primal «whole» being, elaborated in *Smysl liubvi* (The Meaning of Love; 1892-93). The same thinkers also provided the link between literary/artistic practice and religion, picked up by so many of the Silver Age poets. Solov'ev entrusted art with the task of transforming creaturely life into spiritual life,[47] while Berdiaev identified artistic genius with sanctity.[48] While on a deep level the parallels between Leningrad poetry and the Silver Age thinkers are limited (to give just one example, the «New Religious Consciousness» was intended to introduce reforms into the relations between church and society, while the samizdat poets neither wrote tracts nor pursued similar endeavours), the confluences are evident. Given the immersion of the Leningrad poets in Silver Age culture we can see it as a given that, at least on a subconscious level, the Silver Age provided the model for the triangle ecstasy-religion-literature.

Orthodox Poets and the Underground

The poets discussed above were all involved in a religious quest in their personal lives and involved with Orthodoxy to different degrees: Krivulin was reportedly baptised and had a spiritual father (Severiukhin et al. 229), Mironov entertained close relationships with the Tanchik brothers, and it is possible that he was baptised within this circle (Savitskii 26), Shvarts, of Jewish origin became Orthodox shortly before her death,[49] Stratanovskii remains agnostic but his engagement with religious and biblical themes is consistent.[50] Some poets with a stricter orientation towards Orthodoxy struggled to harmonise their faith and their bohemian existence. Boris Kuprianov, active in samizdat poetry throughout the 1970s, eventually became an Orthodox priest in 1990 and abandoned literature completely, observing an incompatibility between the two spheres.[51] Oleg Okhapkin, whose Orthodox upbringing set him apart from his neophyte peers, chose a different path. His poems draw vitality from the tension between demands of Orthodox dogma and the spirit of experiment that reigned in the underground.[52] Some subdued erotic poems and his own experience with alcohol notwithstanding, transgressive ecstasy is largely absent from

---

[47] «Превращение физической жизни в духовную, т.е. в такую, которая, во-первых, имеет сама в себе свое слово и Откровение, способна непосредственно выражаться вовне» (Solov'ev, "Obshchii smysl iskusstva").

[48] «Гениальность есть иной религиозный путь, равноценный и равнодостойный пути святости. Творчество гения есть не "мирское", а "духовное" делание» (Genius is a different religious path, equal in worth to the path of holiness. The creativity of the genius is not 'secular' but 'religious' work) (Berdiaev 392).

[49] Pavel Kriuchkov in his obituary called "Blizhe angel'skaia rech" (The Speech of Angels is Closer) stipulates that Shvarts had asked for baptism in the late 1990s, unbeknownst to many of her friends.

[50] The volume *Smokovnitsa* (The Fig Tree) brings together the religious poetry Stratanovskii wrote over four decades.

[51] Some of Kuprianov's thoughts on the compatibility of poetry, the bohemian lifestyle, and church life can be found on "Slovo, opalënnoe duchom".

[52] Several friends of Okhapkin report that in fact he found it difficult «совместить свою внутреннюю, очень бурную жизнь поэтическую, свои внутренние ценности с объективно данными ценностями христианста. Но он пытался это делать» (to combine his very impetuous inner life of a poet, his inner values, with the objectively given values of Christianity) (Ar'ev, "Tol'ko stikhi. Pamiati Olega Okhapkina").

his writing. However, we find the familiar «drunkenness on words» and tendency towards worshipping the word itself. The poet's vocation becomes his personal cross (and poetry, in some sense, the Christ he follows): «Все это, знать, судьбы моей веленье / и тяжесть крыл, и гнет ужасный, орлий. // И если это – крест, его приемлю» ("Slovo" [The Word]; Okhapkin 147).[53] In a series of poems on Job ("Ispytanie Iova" [The Trial of Job], "Tiazhelye krylia" [Heavy Wings], "Doroga Iova" [The Path of Job]), the Old Testament's test of faith morphs into a writer's crisis of confidence.

Okhapkin wrote a large number of poems on biblical subjects in which he does not significantly digress from the original message. His mystical experience, however, is conveyed in a series of meditations about nature in which the protagonist experiences a feeling of unity, often conditional upon silence.[54] Okhapkin's 'silence mysticism' has a literary model, the tradition of Fedor Tiutchev and Osip Mandel'shtam:

О, если б грешный мой язык
Из подъязычной тишины
Извлёк бы истину на миг,
То в ней звучал бы стон струны.

Лишь эта музыка права.
Она молчанию сродни.
("Legko mne gospodi molchat" [It Is Easy For Me, Lord, To Keep Silent]; Okhapkin 29)[55]

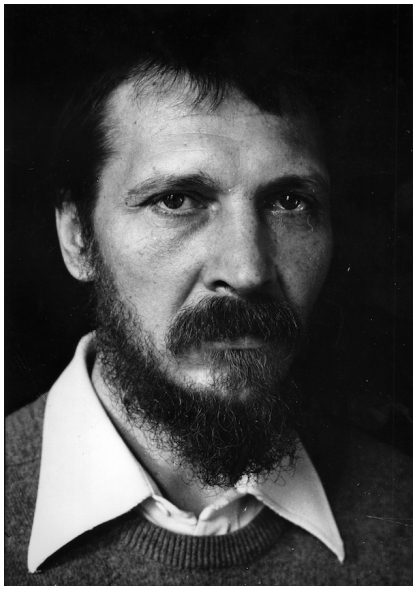

Fig. 5. Oleg Okhapkin. Photo by Tatiana Kovalkova. Used with permission of the author.

[53] «All this my fate dictates / the heaviness of wings, and the horrible, aquiline yoke. // And if this is the cross I will accept it».

[54] For example in "Kakoe schastie slushat' mir, Pesn'ia o poberezhe'e", "Tost", "Molchanie dreva", "S vechera do trekh popolunochi".

[55] «Oh, if only my sinful tongue / could elicit a moment of truth / from the silence underneath the tongue / it would carry the string's moan. // This music alone is true./It is akin to silence».

Silence is conceived as the ground of poetry, and it loses its truth value once it is verbalised.[56] But Okhapkin's understanding of silence goes deeper and has a distinct religious angle to it; silence is not only «higher than words», but also the state in which the human being can reach out to God: «Свыше слов и слав – Тишь, молчание, Бог» ("Tost" [A Toast]; Okhapkin 46).[57] In this sense, Okhapkin's silence poems are paradoxical – they are not «silent poems», but «poems about silence», and very eloquent poems at that. Unlike in the work of Mironov, where silence, or wordlessness, indicates a complete breakdown of language and referential frameworks, Okhapkin's writing expressed the traditional predicament besetting anyone who wants to exalt silence: poetry, as a form of expression based on language, can address silence only through the medium of words, i.e. in a symbolic way. The poet and the mystic thus share the same predicament. The mystic's experience cannot be described or defined, only alluded to. Thus he or she needs to find images as well as the «openness of meaning» that invite the reader into the experience without being prescriptive. Ol'ga Sedakova defines this openness of meaning as a prerequisite for poetic creativity and her reason for rejecting the label «religious poet»: «Назвать себя "религиозным" или "православным" поэтом значило бы ручаться […] за соответствие собственных сочинений доктрине. […] Поэзия для меня немыслима без открытости смысла» (Sedakova, "Interv'iu s V. Polukhinoi (1989)" 249).[58] The exaltation of silence, ecstatic «madness» and allegorical transformation of biblical imagery are all examples of this openness of meaning.

Conclusion

In his overview of religious imagery in the thought of his contemporaries, Stratanovskii boldly affirms: «Если есть [личностиное отношение к Богу, личностное отношение к Священному Писанию] то поэт найдет язык, на котором ему надлежит разговаривать с Богом» (Stratanovskii, "Religioznye motivy v sovremennoi russkoi poezii. Stat'ia chetvertaia" 156).[59] The conclusion that doctrinally speaking, the poetry of the foremost representatives of the Leningrad underground cannot be called «religious», let alone «Christian», misses the point. Its irreverence and occasional outspoken blasphemy notwithstanding, this poetry testifies to a consciousness that is not content with the limits of the material world; it is expression of a deep longing, the longing that is the basis of any religious impulse. The *samizdat* poets employed an ironically undercut image of the Romantic poet-prophet who uses literature to tell of a personal insight. This model is relevant, because it emphasises the centrality of the text for the poet's endeavour: the site

[56] The idea of silence as a primeval state from which poetry arises points to the concept Osip Mandelshtam developed in "Silentium" (1910). Mandelshtam's "Silentium" is in dialogue with Tiutchev's eponymous poem from 1830, in which the latter stipulates his famous maxime that «мысль изреченная есть ложь» (a thought once uttered is a lie). Okhapkin's desire for his tongue «to elicit a moment of truth» appears to rephrase precisely this line.

[57] «Above all words and glories are Silence, wordlessness, God».

[58] «To call myself a "religious" or "orthodox" poet would mean to vouch […] for my work's correspondence to doctrine. [...] Poetry without an open meaning is unthinkable to me».

[59] «Where there is [a personal relation to God, a personal relation to Holy Scripture] the poet will find the language in which it is appropriate for him to speak to God».

where his or her quest takes place is the literary text, the poem, and this means that in the final equation, poetry is more important than the quest to which it testifies. Stanislav Savitskii has spoken about the «religious-artistic mythology» (религиозно-художественная мифология) of unofficial Leningrad culture (Savitskii 29). Savitskii is right to hyphenate the adjectives «religious» and «artistic» here, as the religious elements were conditional upon the artistic ones, in other words, art became a religious activity and vice versa. The samizdat poets were seekers rather than prophets with a clear message to tell. Their message, heavily signposted with Christian symbols, is simple – the surface of the world remains permeable, and literature, or art, might be one of the ways – or perhaps the only way – to be in communion with that which is not quite from this world.

Bibliography

Ar'ev, Andrei. "Tol'ko stikhi. Pamiati Olega Okhapkina." *Svoboda*, 10 Oct. 2008. Web. 04 May 2015. <http://www.svoboda.org/content/article/468261.html>.

Belyi, Andrei. "Smysl' iskusstva." *Simvolizm* (1910). München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1969. 195-230. Print.

Berdiaev, Nikolai. "Smysl tvorchestva" (1916). *Filosofiia svobody. Smysl tvorchestva.* Moscow: Pravda, 1989. 254-534. Print.

---. "O novom religioznom soznanii" (1905). *Sub Speciae Aeternitatis*. Moscow: Kanon +, 2002. 378-418. Print.

Berg, Michael. "Neofitsial'naia leningradskaia literatura mezhdu proshlym i budushchim." *Mikhail Berg*. 2005. Web. 11 May 2015. <http://www.mberg.net/prbud/>.

---. *Literokratiia. Problema prisvoeniia i pereraspredeleniia vlasti v literature.* Moskva: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2000. Print.

Bodin, Per-Arne. *Language, Canonization and Holy Foolishness: Studies in Postsoviet Russian Culture and the Orthodox Tradition.* Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, 2009. Print.

Briusov, Valerii. "Ko vessel, kto pishet." *Sredi stikhov: 1894-1924. Manifesty. Stat'i. Retsenzii.* Eds. N. A. Bogomolov and N. V. kotrelev. Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1990. 61-68. Print.

---. *Sobranie sochinenii.* Vol. 1. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1973. Print.

Bychkov, Vitaly. *Russkaia teurgicheskaia estetika.* Moscow: Progress-Traditsiia, 2001. Print.

Epshtein, Mikhail. "Iskusstvo avangarda i religioznoe soznanie." *Novyi mir* 12 (1989). Print.

---. *Postmodern v russkoi literature.* Moscow: Vysshaia shkola, 2005. Print.

Gaidenko, Piama. *Vladimir Solov'ev i filosofiia Serebrianogo veka.* Moscow: Progress-Traditsiia, 2001. Print.

Goricheva, Tatiana et al. "*P'iu vino arkhaizmov…" O poezii Viktora Krivulina.* Saint Petersburg: KOSTA, 2007. Print.

Ivanov, Boris. "Viktor Krivulin – poet rossiiskogo renessansa." *Peterburgskaia poeziia v litsakh*. Ed. by B. Ivanov. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2011. 293-368. Print.

Ivanov, Sergei A. *Blazhennye pokhaby: kul'turnaia istoriia iurodstva*. Moscow: Iazyki slavianskikh kul'tur, 2005. Print.

Ivanov, Viacheslav. "Nitsshe i Dionis." *Lik i lichiny Rossii*. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1995. 38-50. Print.

Khodasevich, Vladislav. "O Sirine." *Sobranie sochinenii*. Ed. by V. Khodasevich. Vol. 2. Moscow: Soglasie, 1999. 388-95. Print.

Kriuchkov, Pavel. "Blizhe angel'skaia rech." *Doma* 5 (85) (2010). Web. 15 May 2015. <https://foma.ru/blizhe-angelskaya-rech.html>.

Krivulin, Viktor. *Stikhi*. Vol. 1. Paris-Leningrad: Beseda, 1988.

---. *Okhota na mamonta*. Saint Petersburg: BLITs, 1998. Print.

---. "Peterburgskaia spiritual'naia lirika." *Istoriia leningradskoi nepodtsensurnoi literatury*. Ed. by B. Ivanov and B. Roginskii. Saint Petersburg: DEAN, 2000. 99-110. Print.

Kuprianov. "Slovo, opalënnoe duchom." *Voda živaja* 5 (2015). Web. 15 May 2015. <http://aquaviva.ru/journal/?jid=66148#ad-image-3>.

Lygo, Emily. *Leningrad Poetry 1853-1975: The Thaw Generation*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010. Print.

Matich, Olga. *Erotic Utopia: The Decadent Imagination in Russia's Fin-De-Siècle*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 2005. Print.

Men', Aleksandr. *Russkaia religioznaia filosofiia. Lektsii*. Moscow: Khram Sviatykh Bessrebrennikov Kosmy i Damiana v Shubine, 2003. Print.

Mironov, Aleksandr. *Izbrannoe. Stikhotvoreniia i poemy*. Saint Petersburg: INAPRESS, 2002.

---. "Malaia Sadovaia. 1960-e. Beseda s Iuliei Valievoi." *Sumerki "Saigona."* Ed. by Iuliia Valieva. Saint Petersburg: Samizdat, 2009. 32-35. Print.

Nesterov, Anton. "Germenevtika, metafizika i 'drugaia kritika'." *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie* 61 (2003): 75-97. Print.

Nikolaev, Nikolai. "Pod znakom 64-go." *Sumerki "Saigona."* Ed. by Iuliia Valieva. Saint Petersburg: Samizdat, 2009. 35-49. Print.

Okhapkin, Oleg. *Stikhi*. Leningrad – Paris: Beseda, 1989. Print.

Paperno, Irina and Joan Delaney Grossman, eds. *Creating Life: The Aesthetic Utopia of Russian Modernism*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1994. Print.

Pazukhin, Evgenii. *Zerkalo slavy*. Leningrad: Samizdat typescript, 1988.

Pudovkina, Elena. "Klub 'Derzanie'." *Pchela* 26/27 (2000). Web. 15 May 2015. <http://www.pchela.ru/podshiv/26_27/club.htm>.

Sabbatini, Marco. "The Pathos of Holy Foolishness in the Leningrad Underground." *Holy Foolishness in Russia: New Perspectives*. Ed. by Priscilla Hunt and Svitlana Kobets. Bloomington: Slavica Publishers, 2011. 337-52. Print.

Savitskii, Stanislav. *Andegraund. Istoriia i mify leningradskoi neofitsial'noi literatury*. Moscow: NLO, 2002. Print.

Sedakova, Ol'ga. "Muzyka glukhogo vremeni." *Vestnik novoi literatury* 2 (1990): 257-63. Print.

---. "Interv'iu s V. Polukhinoi (1989)." *Iosif Brodskii glazami sovremennikov. Kniga pervaia (1987-1992)*. Ed. by V. Polukhina. Saint Petersburg: Zvezda, 2006. 247-66. Print.

Seifrid, Thomas. *The Word Made Self: Russian Writings on Language, 1860-1930*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2005. Print.

Severiukhin, Dimitry and Vyacheslav Dolinin, eds. *Samizdat Leningrada. 1950e—1980e gody. Literaturnaia entsiklopediia*. Moscow: NLO, 2003. Print.

Stratanovskii, Sergei. *Stikhi*. Saint Petersburg: Novaia literatura, 1993. Print.

---. "Religioznye motivy v sovremennoi russkoi poezii. Stat'ia chetvertaia." *Volga* 8 (1993): 153-56. Print.

---. *Smokovnitsa: Stikhi raznykh let*. Saint Petersburg: Pushkinskii fond, 2010. Print.

Shvarts, Elena. "Nebesnyi balet." *Obvodnyi kanal* 7 (1985). Print.

---. *Sochineniia*. Vol. I. Saint Petersburg: Pushkinskii Fond, 2002. Print.

Solov'ev, Vladimir. "Obshchii smysl iskusstva" (1890). *Vehi*. Web. 15 May 2015. <http://vehi.net/soloviev/smysl_isk.html>.

Stratanovskii, Sergei. "Religioznye motivy v sovremennoi russkoi poezii." *Volga* 4 (1993): 158-61; *Volga* 5 (1993): 148-51; *Volga* 6 (1993): 142-45; *Volga* 8 (1993): 153-56. Print.

Voloshin, Maksimilian. "O smysle tantsa." *Liki tvorchestva*. Leningrad: Nauka, 1988. 395-98. Print.

Walker, Clint B. "The Spirit(s) of the Leningrad Underground." *The Slavic and East European Journal* 43 (1999): 674-98. Print.

Zhitenev, A. A. *Poeziia neomodernizma*. Saint Petersburg: Inapress, 2012. Print.

Zubova, Liudmila. *Sovremennaia russkaia poeziia v kontekste istorii iazyka*. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obzorenie, 2000. Print.